Ray Suits To Raise 'Commotion'

Savannah, Ga. (UPI) — Attorney J. B. Stoner says he will raise a "commotion" next week when he files civil suits on behalf of James Earl Ray against "national figures."

"The suits will be of such a nature that they will cause quite a commotion," Stoner, a leader of the National States Rights Party, said Tuesday.

The suits which he will file for Ray, now appealing for a new trial in the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "will involve national figures but won't mention any national organizations at this time," Stoner said.

Stoner, who has past connections with the Ku Klux Klan, stressed, however, that he would not defend Ray in any criminal case.

"I've been talking to him (Ray) only about the civil action," Stoner said. "There's an overlapping in the criminal and civil cases, but my interest is in the civil case."

Stoner had said Saturday before his visit to Ray in Tennessee State Prison in Nashville that he possibly would represent Ray in libel suits against national magazines.

Tuesday, however, Stoner indicated there would be no libel suits in the immediate future.

Meanwhile, in Memphis, the $55,000 in reward money offered in the slaying of King—which cannot go to the FBI — may go unclaimed.

Shelby County Exec. Asst. Atty. Gen. Robert K. Dwyer said the key to the arrest and conviction of Ray for the murder of King was fingerprints of Ray found on the murder weapon left on the sidewalk minutes after the civil rights leader was slain

Ray Visit By Lawyer Prohibited

MAR 27 1969

Richard J. Ryan, a Memphis attorney, attempted to visit James Earl Ray at the State Prison Wednesday but was turned away by prison officials.

Ray, serving a 99-year prison sentence handed down after he pleaded guilty to the murder of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., has reportedly been in contact with a Memphis lawyer about changing his plea, but officials were not certain that Ryan was the attorney Ray contacted.

Harry S. Avery, state commissioner of correction, said Ryan was turned away because he had not been officially retained by Ray. He added that Ryan would not be allowed to see the prisoner until after his prison classification is completed sometime next month.

Avery said prison regulations allow only the prisoner's immediate family to visit during the "six-week classification period."

"As a courtesy we usually allow any attorney who has been officially retained to visit inmates at any time," said Avery. "But we are not going to let in just any Tom, Dick and Harry who would like to represent him."

Avery also disclosed that Ray's official biographer, author William Bradford Huie, has also been temporarily denied permission to visit the prisoner.

The commissioner said the author who has contracted with Ray to write his life story, telephoned and requested that he be allowed to visit Ray. The request was denied "at least until after the classification period," Avery said.

Attorney Not Allowed To Visit Ray

MAR 27 1969

By JIM SQUIRES

Memphis attorney Richard J. Ryan attempted to visit James Earl Ray in the state prison yesterday but was turned away by prison officials.

Harry S. Avery, state commissioner of corrections, said Ryan has not been officially retained and will not be allowed to see Ray until after the prisoner has been classified next month.

AT THE SAME time, a decision was handed down by the Tennessee Supreme Court yesterday which could adversely affect any effort by Ray to set aside his 99-year sentence for the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King.

The court, in an opinion by Justice Allison B. Humphreys, ruled that a convicted criminal cannot seek to invalidate a prison sentence on grounds he was misadvised by his attorney to plead guilty.

In Memphis, a prosecutor in the Ray Case, Exec. Asst. Dist. Atty. Gen. Robert K. Dwyer, praised the high court ruling as "assuring more than ever that Ray's conviction will stand."

Jerry Ray said last week his brother would seek a new trial in Memphis on grounds he was "pressured" by his former attorney, Percy Foreman, into entering a guilty plea in King's death.

Jerry Ray said his brother had written to a Memphis attorney asking him to have the guilty plea set aside. At that time Jerry Ray identified the attorney as "A. J. Ryman."

HOWEVER, Ryan indicated to prison officials yesterday he was the attorney contacted by Ray. His request to talk to the prisoner about the possibility of being retained was denied.

Ryan reportedly was en route back to Memphis last night and was not available for comment.

Avery said prison regulations forbid visitation privileges for anyone other than the prisoner's immediate family during the "six-week classification period." This is the six weeks immediately following a prisoner's incarcera-